Is there an I at different levels - ~~unmanifested, manifested~~ non-manifestation (avyakta), manifestation (Vyakta) and the Individual?

This is the question often posed before Shri Maharaj in various ways, in different words, at various times, the essence of the question being the same: Is there an 'I' at different levels. Sometimes the bolder visitor might bring this up right at the start of a session if Shri Maharaj happened to mention - which he does very often - that his listeners must always bear in mind that he is talking not to an individual but to that consciousness which gives sentience to the sentient being. and

Shri Maharaj's answer to this question is that there cannot be any ~~dis~~ such distinction except at mind level. On the level of the mind, the I may be considered under three aspects - a) The Impersonal - the Avyakta (unmanifested) - the Absolute 'I' beyond all sensory perception or experience; b) The Super-Personal - the Vyakta, (manifested), which is the reflection of the Absolute in consciousness as "I-AM", awareness of ~~its~~ existence; and c) The personal - the Vyakti, which is the construct of the physical and vital processes - the psycho-somatic apparatus - in which consciousness manifests itself.

Shri Maharaj makes it a point to repeat at intervals, very often, that such a distinction is purely conceptual and cannot exist in reality, because as the discussion or ~~thinking~~ thought proceeds on such a distinction, ~~this basic point is forgotten~~ and innumerable queries and difficulties ~~branch off~~ ~~are thrown out~~ at various points, essentially because this basic ~~point~~ is forgotten.

There is essentially no difference, Shri Maharaj avers, # between the manifest (Vyakta) and non-manifest (Avyakta) - like light and daylight. The universe is full of light but that light cannot be seen until it is reflected against a surface as daylight; and what the daylight reveals is the person (Vyakti). The person in the form of the

human body is always the object, the consciousness as the subject witness is the subject, and the relation of mutual dependence - the consciousness cannot appear without the apparatus of a body and the body cannot have sentience without consciousness - is the reflection of their basic identity with the Absolute. They are both the same consciousness, one at rest the other in movement each conscious of the other: the totality of the perceived is what may be called matter, and the totality of all perceivers may be called the universal mind. The union of the two manifests itself as the quality and its application: love and loving, perceptibility and perceiving, intelligence and harmony.

The entire manifested universe, explains Shri Maharaj, exists only in consciousness, while He himself has his stand in the Absolute. The conceptualised process would be that consciousness arises (for no particular cause or reason, other than that it is its nature to do so - like waves on water) in Pure Being, and in consciousness the world appears and disappears. And each one of us is entitled to say: all there is, is I, all there is, is mine; before all beginnings, after all endings, I AM there to witness whatever happens.

Therefore, Shri Maharaj makes it clear, it is not that the world does not exist. As an appearance in consciousness, the world is the totality of the known in the immensity of the unknown. The world can be said to appear but not BE, and the length of the appearance will, of course, vary according to the scale of time. Apart from the fact that the world disappears in deep sleep and reappears in the waking state, the length of its appearance would vary according to the span of allotted span of time from an insect to Brahma - Vishnu - Maheshwar! Ultimately, therefore whatever is time-bound must end and cannot then have any reality.

The manner in which Shri Maharaj expounds knowledge is truly astonishing in its range of aspects, while

the central theme continues to remain firmly anchored. For instance, he explains the present theme in another way. Awareness, he says, comes from the Absolute (Avyakta) and pervades the inner self (Vyakta); ~~whereas~~ the outer self (Vyakti) is that part of one's being of which one is not aware inasmuch as although one may be conscious (for every sentient being has consciousness) it is possible for one not to be aware. In other words, the outer self (Vyakti) is delineated by the physical body, the inner self (Vyakta) by consciousness, and it is only in pure awareness that the Supreme (Avyakta) can be contacted.

There can never be any experience as such of the Absolute for the simple reason that there cannot possibly be anything objective at all about the Absolute. It is the self which is the experiencing medium for all experience. ~~The Absolute makes the experience possible, the Self makes it actual~~. The absolute provides the potentiality for the experience, the Self provides the actuality.

The individual person's contact with the awareness of the Absolute can come about only when 'the mind is fasting' because then the process of the movement of the mind creating movements in consciousness ceases. When the mind is quiet, it reflects Reality; when the mind is absolutely motionless in its fasting, the mind dissolves and only Reality remains, — until there is a fresh movement in consciousness! That is why, says Shri Maharaj, it is necessary again and again to be "one with consciousness".

Awareness, Shri Maharaj points out, when it is in contact with an object — a physical form — becomes witnessing. When at the same time there is self-identification with the object, such a state becomes the person. In reality, there is only one state: when contaminated by self-identification, it may be called a person; when it is tainted by a sense of BEING, the resulting consciousness becomes the witness — when it remains in its pristine purity, untinted and untainted, it is

the Supreme, the Absolute. ~~It is~~

It is necessary to be clear about the difference between awareness of the Absolute and the consciousness of in which the universe appears, Shri Maharaj repeatedly warns us. One is only the reflection of the other; the reflection of the Sun in the dew-drop is not the Sun. In the absence of objectivisation — as in deep sleep — the apparent universe is NOT, but we ARE. This is so because 'what we are is what the apparent universe is, and vice versa — dual in presence, non-dual in absence, sundered only in manifestation'.